



PRESS RELEASE
*Office of the United States Attorney
Middle District of Florida*

PAUL I. PEREZ
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

400 North Tampa Street
Suite 3200
Tampa, Florida 33602
813/274-6000
813/274-6300 (Fax)

300 North Hogan Street
Suite 700
Jacksonville, Florida 32201
904/301-6300
904/301-6310 (Fax)

501 West Church Street
Suite 300
Orlando, Florida 32805
407/648-7500
407/648-7643 (Fax)

2110 First Street
Suite 3-137
Fort Myers, Florida 33901
239/461-2200
239/461-2219 (fax)

Contact: Steve Cole ♦ Public Affairs Specialist ♦ 813/274-6352

For Immediate Release

November 7, 2006

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND ANOTHER EMPLOYEE
OF BROOKSVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY
CHARGED WITH STEALING GOVERNMENT FUNDS

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney Paul I. Perez today announced the unsealing of two separate indictments, charging employees of the Brooksville Housing Authority with the theft of government funds. The first indictment charges BETTY CHANDLER TRENT, the Executive Director of the Brooksville Housing Authority with five separate counts. The second indictment charges JOE ANN BENNETT, the project manager of the Brooksville Housing Authority, with six separate counts.

Each of the defendants is charged as follows: count one - conspiracy, count two - mail fraud, count three - theft concerning programs receiving federal funds, count four - false claims, and count five - theft of public money. In addition, JOE ANN BENNETT is charged in count six with falsification of records in a federal investigation. The maximum penalties for these charges are as follows:

Count	Imprisonment	Fine	Supervised Release
One	5 years	\$250,000	3 years
Two	20 years	\$250,000	5 years
Three	5 years	\$250,000	3 years
Four	5 years	\$250,000	3 years
Five	10 years	\$250,000	3 years
Six	20 years	\$250,000	5 years

The case was investigated by the Office of Inspector General, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.